

Donnybrook/Pro-Cathedral

26 January 2022

Welcome

It is almost impossible for us to hear the parable of the sower without the interpretation given. The “explanation” is clear and powerful and it does leave its mark on our imagination.

Topic

Nevertheless, many students of the Bible would hold that the interpretation is later and that originally the parable had a different focus. Probably we need both perspectives.

Steps

People who study the gospel would often hold that the interpretation given is not original to the historical Jesus but reflects later experiences of ministry and even persecution. The church tradition evolved a reading which treats the parable as an allegory, a kind of moral tale, to be decoded, part by part. This is indeed memorable and engaging: and indeed we do all wonder into which category we might fit.

Originally, however, the parable had a different energy and focus. It expresses the powerful conviction that the proclamation of the Good News is unstoppable and will be enormously successful – fruitful to an unbelievable degree. At the time, on the lips of Jesus, it must have seemed highly improbable – just as improbable as it must seem to us today.

Conclusion

As we set out on our synodal pathways, perhaps we need this reassurance, this guarantee, this energetic vision. The whole project will be a success if we follow the advice of Paul to Timothy and fan into a flame the gifts each one of us has been given.